## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-31 (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) A method of inducing an antigen specific immune response in a subject comprising

administering to the subject an expression plasmid vector capable of expressing a hepatitis B virus surface or core antigen, or a fragment thereof, and including a promoter for the expression of the hepatitis B virus antigen in the subject in an effective amount to induce an antigen specific immune response against the hepatitis B virus antigen.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein administration of said vector is conducted at least five days after administration of at least one substance capable of inducing a coagulating necrosis of muscle fibers and wherein said administration of said vector and said substance is about in the same area.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein said substance is bupivacaine.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the vector is administered at least 7 days after the administration of bupivacaine.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the administration is carried out by intramuscular injection.

37. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 36, wherein the intramuscular injection is carried out using a liquid jet gun.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the promoter is endogenous to hepatitis B virus.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the antigen is a protein or antigenic portion thereof selected from the group consisting of major/small envelope protein (S), middle envelope protein ($S_2$-S), and large envelope protein ($S_1$-$S_2$-S).

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the gene encodes the S protein.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the promoter is a viral promoter.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the promoter is a cytomegalovirus promoter.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the promoter is a mammalian promoter.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S1.S.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1411.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1410.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pRSV-HBS deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1371.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pHBV-S1.S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1409.

48. (Withdrawn) A plasmid vector comprising a promoter selected from the group consisting of rous sarcoma virus (RSV) and cytomegalovirus (CMV) and a gene encoding a hepatitis B virus antigen.

49. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the hepatitis B virus antigen is a protein or antigenic portion thereof selected from the group consisting of major/small envelope protein (S), middle envelope protein ($S_2$-S), and large envelope protein ($S_1$-$S_2$-S).

50. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S1.S.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1411.

51. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1410.

52. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pRSV-HBS deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1371.

53. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pHBV-S1.S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1409.